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New legislation termed ‘burial’ of Constitution

• Treasury defends 27th Amendment as opposition decries haste, judicial shake-up • Barrister Ali Zafar warns disturbing ‘balance of five state pillars’ will lead to chaos

By Syed Irfan Raza

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Sunday held a detailed debate on the proposed 27th Constitutional Amendment in a relatively smooth sitting, except for the exchange of some harsh words, as the opposition did not create any trouble for the treasury benches that it had demonstrated in the past.

Although opposition senators, mostly from the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf, described the 26th Amendment, passed last year, as a “death” and the proposed 27th Amendment as an attempt to “bury the Constitution”, they neither boycotted proceedings nor staged a protest.

Most of them instead urged the government to hold a detailed discussion before putting the bill to a vote. But opposition parties stayed away from the parliamentary committee on law and justice examining the 27th Amendment.

The rare Sunday session was convened with a one-point agenda to deliberate on the bill, a 26-page draft tabled in the Senate a day earlier amid opposition outcry over its pace and scope, just hours after cabinet approval.

During the session, PTI senators placed photographs of their incarcerated founder Imran Khan on their desks.

Warning of ‘chaos’

PTI parliamentary leader Barrister Ali Zafar warned that disturbing the “balance of five

pillars” of the state could lead to “major chaos”.

He feared the proposed Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) would be given “unbridled powers”, which would plunge the system into disorder.

He said that under the proposed amendment, lifetime immunity was being given to the president and four provincial governors, so that no one could question them about what they do during their terms.

PTI senators argued that the amendment would undermine the judiciary and empower the government to transfer any high court judge anywhere in the country.

After presenting his objections, Barrister Zafar urged the House to reject the bill and invited the treasury to further discussions.

Barrister Zafar claimed that controversial proposals relating to provincial shares under the 18th Amendment had been dropped from the current draft as a “face-saving” measure for the PPP so that other intended changes could be passed.

PTI Senator Hamid Khan insisted that the 26th Amendment was death and the 27th would be the “burial of the Constitution”.

He warned that history would not forgive those who had voted for the previous amendment or who are now supporting the new one.

The atmosphere grew heated at one point when the Senate chairman gave PTI’s Faisal Javed the floor and another

lawmaker interjected. “Who are you to say this to me when the chairman has allowed me to speak?” Mr Javed shot back.

‘Political tool’

From the treasury benches, PML-N Senator Pervaiz Rashid regretted that Barrister Zafar had presented just one side of the picture, “which is likeable to them”. He said the PTI leader did not mention anything about the effort in the past to “convert the judiciary into a tool of a political party”.

The PML-N lawmaker said the members from the opposition benches had spoken on just one point of the proposed amendment, which pertained to the judiciary, indicating their acceptance of other clauses.

PPP Senator Syed Masroor Ahsan said PTI lawmakers appeared “confused”, which resulted in loud protests from the opposition benches.

PTI Senator Azam Swati, wearing a black ribbon on his arm, praised the “amazing” 1973 Constitution framed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and other leaders. He stressed that the 27th Amendment would “ruin” it.

PTI’s Mohsin Aziz questioned the “haste” behind the new package, noting that some “informed” individuals already knew that this legislation would be introduced.

Balochistan Awami Party Senator Danesh Kumar questioned why, when amendments were proposed, they did not address the lack of minorities in the federal cabinet.

Nation commemorates Iqbal’s 148th birth anniversary

• Change of Guard ceremony held at his mausoleum, with Pakistan Navy taking over duties from Pakistan Rangers (Punjab) • President Zardari, PM Shehbaz renew commitment to Iqbal’s foundational principles

LAHORE: An impressive change of guard ceremony was held at the mausoleum of Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal as the nation celebrated the 148th birth anniversary of the Mufakkir-i-Pakistan, the visionary behind the ideology of an independent Muslim state in the subcontinent.

A smartly attired contingent of Pakistan Navy took over guard duties from Pakistan Rangers (Punjab), says a news release issued by the Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy) on Sunday.

Commander Central Punjab of Pakistan Navy, Rear Admiral Sohail Ahmad Azmie, graced the occasion as the chief guest.

Rear Admiral Azmie laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum on behalf of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, as well as officers, sailors, and civilians of the Pakistan Navy, and offered fateha.



PAKISTAN Navy and Rangers pay homage to Allama Iqbal on his 148th birthday anniversary at Mazar-i-Iqbal.—APP

The ceremony was attended by dignitaries, members of the media, and a large number of the general public.

President, PM messages

Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

renewed their commitment to the foundational principles of Allama Muhammad Iqbal, presenting his vision as the essential guide for achieving a flourishing, peaceful, and unified nation.

In separate messages marking the birth anniversary

of the national poet, they paid homage to his intellectual legacy and his extraordinary role in awakening the spirit of independence among the Muslims of the Subcontinent.

President Zardari emphasised the lasting impact of Allama Iqbal’s political philosophy, stating that his insistence on distinct representation for Muslims has left an indelible imprint on Pakistan’s national identity.

PM Shehbaz highlighted the contemporary global relevance of Iqbal’s teachings, suggesting that the world today is in need of his message of brotherhood, love, and justice.

He connected these ideals to current policy, noting that the government launched several programmes designed to empower the youth, aligning directly with Allama Iqbal’s vision for the younger generation.—Agencies

Govt extends ban on gatherings across Punjab

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: The Punjab government has extended the ban on protests, rallies, sit-ins, and public gatherings for the fourth consecutive time for a week owing to perpetual concerns over terrorism and public order and threat perceptions.

As the third order term expired on Saturday, the Punjab home department on Sunday yet again notified imposition of Section 144 of the Code of Criminal

Procedure, 1898, across the province for another seven days.

The Punjab government had initially imposed the ban on Oct 8 for 10 days and then notified extensions on Oct 18, Oct 25, Nov 2, and eventually on Nov 9 for one week ban each.

The home department has extended the ban on rallies, gatherings, carrying of arms, use of loudspeakers and spreading of provocative material.

The home department in its order says review of the latest reports and threat assessments shared by law enforcement

and intelligence agencies explains the threat perception to public peace, tranquillity and law and order has not abated.

Extending the ban for the fourth time, the home department asserts continuation of restrictions including assembly, gathering, procession or sit-in of four or more persons in any public place, street, road or open space; carrying of arms, use of loudspeakers as well as publishing, disseminating or display of any provocative material that may incite public sentiment or disturb inter-faith and sectarian harmony.



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